

ECRP I

European Collaborative Research Projects



The European Collaborative Research Projects in the Social Sciences.

The ECRP Programme is designed to advance international research collaboration in the social sciences by encouraging European academic networking and pooling of research expertise. The Programme offers an opportunity to carry out problem-driven multilateral projects on any topic within the Social Sciences that demonstrates an international framework for research collaboration. Projects need not be exclusively European in their topic focus.

- ECRP is part of the EUROCORES Scheme that provides a flexible framework to support top class European research in and across all scientific areas.
- Research funding is provided by participating national research funding and research performing agencies.
- The European Science Foundation provides the Programme coordination and supports scientific networking of funded scientists in different EUROCORES ECRP Programmes.
- EUROCORES ECRP funds research in the social sciences that is only of the highest quality, is innovative and collaborative.

The Projects

In the 2005 competition, the following eight CRPs have been funded.

Eye-Movement Control in Reading: basic and applied issues of fixation and saccade generation

(Funding organisations: DFG, FWF, ESRC)

Reading is a central cultural skill, enabling the pursuit of goals ranging from education to social participation. At the behavioural level, reading comprises alternations of eye fixations and quick eye movements modulated by visual, language-related and oculomotor dynamics that can be simulated by computer programs. This project will research new, complex reading dynamics with a three-pronged programme:

1. Collecting new reading data to isolate language-dependent and language-independent effects.
2. Testing computer models of reading in different languages and against each other for the first time.
3. Linking the expertise of Individual Projects (IPs) through associated experiments (addressing, for example, differences between oral and silent reading, or spatial coding of text material during reading).

Project Leader:

Professor Reinhold Kliegl

University of Potsdam, Germany
Email: kliegl@uni-potsdam.de

Principal Investigators:

Professor Alan Kennedy

University of Dundee, United Kingdom
Email: a.kennedy@dundee.ac.uk

Dr. Richard Charles Shillcock

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Email: rcs@inf.ed.ac.uk

Dr. Heinz Wimmer

Universität Salzburg, Austria
Email: heinz.wimmer@sbg.ac.at

Project Members:

Professor Ralf Engbert

Universität Potsdam, Germany
Email: engbert@uni-potsdam.de

Dr. Martin Herbert Fischer

University of Dundee, United Kingdom
Email: m.h.fischer@dundee.ac.uk

Dr. Wayne Stuart Murray

University of Dundee, United Kingdom
Email: w.s.murray@dundee.ac.uk

Associate Partner:

Professor Ronan Reilly

NUI Maynooth, Ireland
Email: ronan.reilly@may.ie

The Integration of the European Second generation (TIES). A research project in fifteen cities in eight countries.

(Funding organisations: NWO, MEC, FAS, SNF)

Immigration and the subsequent integration of newcomers is one of the foremost challenges for Europe's increasingly heterogeneous cities. The integration of the second generation — the children born of immigrant parentage in the country of immigration — is crucial to this process. The oldest group of the second generation is now entering the labour market and the TIES project will describe its position in several domains (education, labour market, housing, identity, social relations, family formation, transnationalism, religion) through a standardised international survey.

In the TIES project we will compare the Turkish, Moroccan and ex-Yugoslavian second generation across fifteen cities in eight countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Project Leader:

Dr. Maurice Crul

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
Email: m.r.j.crul@uva.nl

Principal Investigators:

Professor Rosa Aparicio

Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain
Email: raparicio@iem.upco.es

Dr. Rosita Fibbi

Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies,
Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Email: rosita.fibbi@unine.ch

Professor Ebba Hedlund

Stockholm University, Sweden
Email: Ebba.Hedlund@ceifo.su.se

Project Members:

Dr. Liesbeth Heering

Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute
(NIDI), The Hague, Netherlands
Email: heering@nidi.nl

Mr. Jens Schneider

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
Email: J.Schneider@uva.nl

Professor Andrés Tornos

Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain
Email: tornos@iem.upcomillas.es

Ms. Helga de Valk

Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute
(NIDI), The Hague, Netherlands
Email: valk@nidi.nl

Website: [http://www.tiesproject.eu/component/
option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/lang,en/](http://www.tiesproject.eu/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/lang,en/)

Trafficking for Forced Labour in Industries other than the Sex Industry across Europe

(Funding organisations: ESRC, FWO, GACR, IRCHSS, PAN, FAS)

This proposal follows on from a research project currently underway in the UK, Czech Republic, Portugal and Ireland undertaken by Anti-Slavery International (London), the CSGE (University of Birmingham) and local partner NGOs, with the aim of focusing specifically on persons trafficked for forced labour, services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, and on their access to justice in EU countries.

The project aims to address the fact that so far the identification, assistance and protection strategies for victims of trafficking are designed almost exclusively to address the needs of persons trafficked into the sex industry. Project outcomes will lead to policy recommendations and should improve the understanding of the issue of trafficking for labour exploitation and ensure that it is mainstreamed in the EU.

Project Leader:

Dr. Christien van den Anker

University of the West of England, United Kingdom

Email: Christien.Vandenanker@uwe.ac

Principal Investigators:

Professor Martin S. Ronald Commers

Ghent University, Belgium

Email: ronaldcommers@mac.com

Dr. Pawel Dabrowski

University of Warsaw, Poland

Email: djp@plusnet.pl

Dr. Dusan Drbohlav

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Email: drbohlav@natur.cuni.cz

Dr. Shahram Khosravi

Stockholm University, Sweden

Email: shahram.khosravi@socant.su.se

Dr. Gillian Wylie

Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Email: wylieg@tcd.ie

Project Members:

Dr. Dagmar Dzurova

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Email: dzurova@natur.cuni.cz

Dr. Wim Vandekerckove

Ghent University, Belgium

Email: Wim.vandekerckhove@ugent.be

Ms. An Verlinden

Ghent University, Belgium

Email: an.verlinden@ugent.be

Fabricating Quality in European Education

(Funding organisations: ESRC, FIST, AKA)

Quality assurance and evaluation (QAE) is increasingly important nationally and transnationally in education. It may steer policy and practice at all levels and in all sectors of education in national systems, and may be understood as a form of governance of education. This project draws on detailed individual multilevel studies that share a common design. These studies enable the collaborative project to identify and analyse, through a variety of theoretical approaches, the ways in which education is controlled, managed and governed through QAE. This collaborative project will contribute to the development of comparative methodologies that are sensitive to the influence of transnational pressures for QAE in national systems, while also recognising the importance of context in shaping responses to these pressures.

Project Leader:

Professor Jenny Ozga

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Email: jenny.ozga@ed.ac.uk

Principal Investigators:

Professor Peter Dahler-Larsen

University of Southern Denmark, Odense Denmark
Email: PDL@sam.sdu.dk

Professor Hannu Simola

University of Helsinki, Finland
Email: hannu.simola@helsinki.fi

Project Members:

Dr. Vibeke Normann Andersen

University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark
Email: vna@sam.sdu.dk

Dr. Linda Croxford

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Email: l.croxford@ed.ac.uk

Dr. Sotiria Grek

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Email: Sotiria.Grek@ed.ac.uk

Mr. Jaakko Kauko

University of Helsinki, Finland
Email: Jaakko-Pekka.Kauko@helsinki.fi

Professor Martin Lawn

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Email: m.lawn@btinternet.com

Professor Robert Lingard

University of Edinburgh
United Kingdom
Email: bob.lingard@ed.ac.uk

Ms. Mirka Mäkinen

University of Turku, Finland
Email: mirka.makinen@utu.fi

Dr. Carsten Strømbæk Pedersen

University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark
Email: CSP@sam.sdu.dk

Ms. Hannele Pitkanen

University of Helsinki, Finland
Email: hannele.pitkanen@helsinki.fi

Professor Risto Rinne

University of Turku, Finland
Email: rinne@utu.fi

Dr. Farah Shaik

University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Email: s0682240@education.ed.ac.uk

Dr. Janne Varjo

University of Helsinki, Finland
Email: janne.varjo@helsinki.fi

Associate Partners:

Dr. Ola Lindberg

MidSweden University, Sweden
Email: ola.lindberg@miun.se

Dr. Christina Segerholm

MidSweden University, Sweden
Email: christina.segerholm@miun.se

Website: www.ces.ed.ac.uk/research/FabQ/index.htm

Decision Making: ‘exploiting’ bounded rationality

(Funding organisations: MEC, CNRS, DFG, SNF)

Because people lack the ‘computational power’ needed to take decisions in a fully rational manner, it is important to understand how and how well simple decision rules (that people can use) fare in different kinds of environments and for different types of tasks. An additional, and often critical, consideration is to find ways of helping people make decisions in complex tasks.

The methodology used involves simulations, theoretical statistical analyses and experiments with human participants. In all cases, it considers in detail how abstract or behavioural rules lead to functional or dysfunctional outcomes in different environments. This approach, therefore, leads to the development of ‘environmental’ theories of decision behaviour.

Project Leader:

Professor Robin M. Hogarth

Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain
Email: robin.hogarth@upf.edu

Principal Investigators:

Professor Philippe Delquie

INSEAD, France
Email: philippe.delquie@insead.edu

Professor Ulrich Hoffrage

Université de Lausanne, Switzerland
Email: Ulrich.hoffrage@unil.ch

Professor Martin Weber

Universität Mannheim, Germany
Email: weber@bank.bwl.uni-mannheim

Project Members:

Professor Manuel Baucells

University of Navarre, Spain
Email: Mbaucells@iese.edu

Mrs. Sina Borgsen

University of Mannheim, Germany
Email: borgsen@bank.bwl.uni-mannheim

Professor Juan A. Carrasco

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain
Email: carrasco@eel.upc.es

Professor Enrico Diecidue

INSEAD, France
Email: enrico.diecidue@insead.edu

Professor Franz H. Heukamp

University of Navarre, Spain
Email: fheukamp@iese.edu

Dr. Natalia Karelaia

University of Lausanne, Switzerland
Email: natalia.karelaia@unil.ch

Professor Ayse Öncüler

INSEAD, France
Email: ayse.onculer@insead.edu

Professor Ioana Popescu

INSEAD, France
Email: ioana.popescu@insead.edu

Professor Victor Suñé

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain
Email: sunye@eel.upc.edu

Dynamics of Actors and Networks across Levels: individuals, groups, organisations and social settings

(Funding organisations: NWO, CNRS, DFG, MEC, VR, SNF)

Social networks are increasingly recognised as being important explanations for behaviour and the well-being of individuals and also for the performance of organisations. Simultaneously, social actors choose their relationships on the basis of behaviour patterns and network positions of actual and potential interaction partners. Enhanced understanding of these phenomena requires the empirical study of the mutual influence between the social actor and the social network; in addition, the multiplicity of social subgroups and the diversity of organisations and social settings provide further levels that need to be taken into consideration. This ECRP project brings together various disciplines, with the purpose of elaborating and implementing this new methodology in an optimal way and to profit from it in various studies.

Project Leader:

Professor Tom Snijders

University of Groningen, Netherlands
Email: t.a.b.snijders@ppsw.rug.nl

Principal Investigators:

Professor Ulrik Brandes

University of Konstanz, Germany
Email: Ulrik.Brandes@uni-konstanz.de

Professor Emmanuel Lazega

Université Paris IX-Dauphine, France
Email: emmanuel.lazega@dauphine.fr

Professor Alessandro Lomi

University of Italian Switzerland, Lugano, Switzerland
Email: lomia@lu.unisi.ch

Professor José Luis Molina

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
Email: joseluis.molina@uab.es

Professor Håkan Stattin

Örebro University, Sweden
Email: hakan.stattin@bsr.oru.se

Project Members:

Mr. Krists Boitmanis

University of Konstanz, Germany
Email: boitmani@inf.uni-konstanz.de

Mr. Mohamed Boukhris

University of Italian Switzerland, Switzerland
Email: mohamed.boukhris@lu.unisi.ch

Dr. Carlos Lozares Colina

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
Email: carlos.lozares@uab.es

Dr. Ainhoa de Federico

Université de Lille 1, IFRESI, France
Email: Ainhoa.de-Federico.de-la-Rua@univ-lille1.fr

Dr. Miranda J. Lubbers

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
Email: M.J.Lubbers@rug.nl

Professor Margaret Kerr

BSR Institutionen för beteendevetenskap, Örebro, Sweden
Email: margaret.kerr@bsr.oru.se

Mr. Jürgen Lerner

University of Konstanz, Germany
Email: lerner@inf.uni-konstanz.de

Professor Isidro Maya Jariego

University of Seville, Spain
Email: isidromj@telefonica.net

Mrs. Lise Mounier

ENS, Paris, France
Email: lise.mounier@ens.fr

Professor Erik Larsen Reimer

University of Italian Switzerland, Lugano, Switzerland
Email: erik.larsen@lu.unisi.ch

Dr. Christian Steglich

University of Groningen, Netherlands
Email c.e.g.steglich@rug.nl

Dr. Paola Tubaro

École Normale Supérieure Paris, France
Email: Paola.Tubaro@ens.fr

Mrs. Lei Wang

University of Italian Switzerland, Switzerland
Email: lei.wang@lu.unisi.ch

Website: <http://stat.gamma.rug.nl/ECRP-DANL/>

New Migration Dynamics: regular and irregular work on the European labour market

(Funding organisations: CNRS, PAN, MEC)

This collaborative project deals with working migrations and gender matters in three economic sectors — agriculture, domestic services and prostitution — in which foreigners and among them, women, are over-represented. The study analyses the contradictory demands regarding immigration in the EU, considering the gap between political will, which intends to reduce extra-EU migrations, and economic practice in sectors where low-paid jobs allow the maintenance of economic activities that would not otherwise survive in Western countries.

Researches will analyse both the social and economic implications in the areas concerned in industrialised countries and the impact that these types of jobs and mobility have on migrants' careers. In this context, the role played by women will be highlighted.

Project Leader:

Ms. Swanie Potot

Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis, France

Email: potot@unice.fr

Principal Investigators:

Professor Marek Okolski

Warsaw University, Poland

Email: moko@uw.edu.pl

Professor Dolores Redondo Toronjo

Universidad de Huelva, Spain

Email: toronjo@uhu.es

Project Members:

Ms. Marta Kindler

Warsaw University, Poland

Email: marta.kindler@uw.edu.pl

Ms. Blanca Miedes

Universidad de Huelva, Spain

Email: miedes@uhu.es

Mr. Alain Morice

Université Paris 7 - Denis Diderot, France

Email: morice@univ-paris-diderot.fr

Ms. Joanna Napierala

Warsaw University, Poland

Email: j.m.napierala@uw.edu.pl

Ms. Celia Sanchez Lopez

Universidad de Huelva, Spain

Email: celia@ole.uhu.es

Ms. Francesca Scrinzi

Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis, France

Email: f.scrinzi@lbss.gla.ac.uk

Associate Partners:

Ms. Emanuela Abbatecola

University of Genoa, Italy

Email: eabbatec@panet.it

Dr. Maurizio Ambrosini

University of Genoa, Italy

Email: maurizioambrosini@tin.it

Professor Andrea Réa

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

Email: area@ulb.ac.be

Dr Ralitzia Soultanova

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

Email: rsoultan@ulb.ac.be

Website: <http://www.unice.fr/urmis/spip.php?article204>

Migration and Networks of Care in Europe: a comparative European research project

(Funding organisations: IRCHSS, DFG, NWO, ESRC)

The provision of domestic services in private households has emerged as a major issue in the EU. As female labour force participation has increased, demand for domestic workers has risen. Inadequate state provision for childcare facilities and the care of the elderly, frail and disabled is intensifying this demand, mostly met by migrant women, with non-EU nationals officially accounting for over 10% of those employed in this sector. In this project, the causes and implications of these trends — including an analysis of how transnational migration is affecting the construction of welfare provision and the law in European societies, as well as the home and family — will be examined and policy recommendations made.

Project Leader:

Dr. Linda Connolly

University College Cork, Ireland
Email: l.connolly@ucc.ie

Principal Investigators:

Professor Helma Lutz

Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität,
Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Email: Lutz@soz.uni-frankfurt.de

Dr. Sarah Katherine van Walsum

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
Email: s.k.walsum@rechten.vu.nl

Professor J. Fiona Williams

University of Leeds, United Kingdom
Email: j.f.williams@leeds.ac.uk

Project Members:

Dr. Siobhán Mullally

University College Cork, Ireland
Email: s.mullally@ucc.ie

Dr. Caitriona Ní Laoire

University College Cork, Ireland
Email: c.nilaoire@ucc.ie

Dr. Ewa Palenga

Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität,
Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Email: ewa@palenga.de

European Collaborative Research Projects (ECRP) and the ESF Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS)

The ECRP Scheme is supported by the Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS) which is chaired by Professor Sir Roderick Floud (Professor Emeritus of London Metropolitan University); the Committee is composed of its members, leading scientists nominated by the ESF Member Organisations (research councils or academies) working in social sciences, and observers from other social science institutions. Along with national experts several observers from key social science institutions are also participating in two plenary meetings per year helping to shape the SCSS' role in the European Research Area. The task of the committee is to advance Social Sciences on a European level by supporting innovative research ideas and approaches from the scientific community. Scientific agenda setting is therefore a crucial element of Standing Committee work.

The social sciences encompass a range of disciplines that aim to examine and explain human functioning on a variety of interlocking levels, ranging from neural foundations to individual behaviour, group processes and the functioning of entire societies. Consequently, the social sciences employ a wide variety of methods which address the different levels of analyses that are necessary. Whilst the methods are contrasting, they have been tailor-made to be scientifically rigorous, and to ensure that reliable knowledge is secured. Against this background, the SCSS funds and develops initiatives in the fields of psychology and the cognitive sciences, pedagogic and education research, social anthropology, sociology and gender studies, economics, business and administrative sciences, geography, demography, environmental sciences, law, political sciences, communication sciences, international relations, social statistics and informatics.

For more information go to: www.esf.org/scss

The aim of the European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) Scheme is to enable researchers in different European countries to develop collaboration and scientific synergy in areas where European scale and scope are required to reach the critical mass necessary for top class science in a global context.

The scheme provides a flexible framework which allows national basic research funding and performing organisations to join forces to support excellent European research in and across all scientific areas.

The European Science Foundation (ESF) provides scientific coordination and support for networking activities of funded scientists currently through the EC FP6 Programme, under contract No. ERAS-CT-2003-980409. Research funding is provided by participating national organisations.

www.esf.org/eurocores

THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL FUNDING ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT THE ECRP SCHEME:

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Austrian Science Research Fund, Austria

Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO)

Research Foundation Flanders, Belgium

Research Promotion Foundation (RPF), Cyprus

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Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), Ireland

Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR) *National Research Fund, Luxembourg*

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Norges Forskningsråd (NF) *Research Council of Norway, Norway*

Polska Akademia Nauk (PAN) *Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland*

Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Poland

Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (MEC) *Ministry of Education and Science, Spain*

Forskningsrådet för arbetsliv och socialvetenskap (FAS) *Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, Sweden*

Vetenskapsrådet (VR) *Swedish Research Council, Sweden*

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Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), United Kingdom



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CONTACT DETAILS

Dr. Frank Kuhn

EUROCORES Programme Coordinator for the Social Sciences

Ms. Caroline Eckert

EUROCORES Programme Administrator

European Science Foundation
1 quai Lezay-Marnésia | BP 90015
67080 Strasbourg cedex | France
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 76 21 77
Fax: +33 (0)3 88 37 05 32
Email: fkuhn@esf.org
www.esf.org/ecrp

The European Science Foundation (ESF) provides a platform for its Member Organisations to advance European research and explore new directions for research at the European level. Established in 1974 as an independent non-governmental organisation, the ESF currently serves 77 Member Organisations across 30 countries.

**EUROPEAN
SCIENCE
FOUNDATION**
SETTING SCIENCE AGENDAS FOR EUROPE

1 quai Lezay-Marnésia | BP 90015
67080 Strasbourg cedex | France
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 76 71 00 | Fax: +33 (0)3 88 37 05 32
www.esf.org